

Yesterday Rep. John Hall (D-Dover Plains) and 18 newly elected Representatives released the following letter to President Bush. The representatives urged President Bush to adopt the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group (ISG.)

Hall said: "It's clear that in November the American people voted to change the course in Iraq. As freshmen Members of Congress, we want to deliver that clear message to the President. Though he has yet to indicate that he plans on listening to the American people's call for change, we urge him to abandon his plan to escalate the war and begin to bring our troops home."

February 7, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We oppose your plan to increase troop levels in Iraq.

We support the work and conclusions of the Iraq Study Group (ISG). With its bipartisan composition of eminent national security experts, the ISG provides a road map for a new direction in Iraq.

We urge you to endorse it.

1. We agree with the ISG that Iraq is now engaged in a civil war.

It is not the job of the American military, nor should it be the burden of the American taxpayer, to referee and finance a sectarian civil war.

2. We agree with the recommendations of the ISG that Iraqis must assume responsibility for their future and that American military forces should be redeployed by March of 2008 or sooner.

The American military succeeded in performing the mission you initially assigned it:

- Saddam Hussein was toppled;
- Weapons of mass destruction were not found; and
- Iraq has successfully conducted three democratic elections.

You have recently added a new goal, calling on our military, in effect, to create a viable government in Iraq. There comes a point when a country must decide for itself whether to resolve its differences with violence or negotiation. That is a political decision only Iraqis can

make.

3. We support requiring that any further funding requests for Operation Iraqi Freedom be considered in the normal appropriations process, not through “emergency” supplemental bills. Fiscal responsibility for this war must not be transferred to future generations.

While we oppose your troop surge, we—and all Americans— strongly support our troops. What they require on the battlefield, they must have. What they need when they come home, we will provide.

However, our troops are also entitled to sound public policy with a sensible mission that strengthens America’s national security interests. They have done their job. It is now time for Iraq to take responsibility for its future, not America’s military and taxpayers.

We urge you to pursue a much needed change of policy in Iraq.

Sincerely,

John Hall (NY-19)  
Paul Hodes (NH-02)  
John Yarmuth (KY-03)  
Bruce Braley (IA-01)  
Michael Arcuri (NY-24)  
Steve Cohen (TN-09)  
Phil Hare (IL-17)  
Carol Shea-Porter (NH-01)  
Yvette Clarke (NY-11)  
Baron Hill (IN-09)  
Ed Perlmutter (CO-07)  
David Loebsack (IA-02)  
Patrick Murphy (PA-08)  
Kathy Castor (FL-11)  
Joe Courtney (CT-02)  
Hank Johnson (GA-04)  
Mazie Hirono (HI-02)  
John Sarbanes (MD-03)  
Albio Sires (NJ-13)